



Advocating for women's rights  
and opportunities in Connecticut

Joint Committee on Labor and Public Employees  
Raised Bill No. 5527, *An Act Concerning A Domestic Workers Bill of Rights*  
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Fund  
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My name is Kaitlyn Fydenkevez, and I am a second year law student at the University Of Connecticut School Of Law as well as a legal intern at the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund. The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to empowering women, girls, and their families to achieve equal opportunities in their personal and professional lives. For 40 years, CWEALF has provided information, referral and support to women seeking guidance about questions involving family law, employment discrimination, education, and civil rights.

As an organization that offers services to women and families, CWEALF supports Raised Bill No. 5527, which would expand employment protections to Connecticut's estimated 40,000 domestic workers. At the current time, Connecticut provides insufficient protections to these workers, many of whom are women who work for low pay, no benefits, and in environments where they are not protected from discrimination and harassment. Raised Bill No. 5527 is beneficial not just for domestic workers, but for their employers as well, allowing them to secure more dignified care for their homes and families, and allowing them greater security as they leave their homes to work.

By excluding domestic workers from Connecticut's current labor laws, the state creates a subclass of employees whose contributions are undervalued, and left vulnerable to discrimination and unfair treatment. By expanding the definition of "employee" to include domestic workers, Raised Bill No. 5527 makes domestic workers eligible for state minimum wage and overtime pay. Domestic workers are often responsible for a person's most valuable and personal possessions: their home and family. In light of this, they should be compensated just as much as any other employee in our state.

Further, Raised Bill No. 5527 provides a full range of job-specific protections to domestic workers due to the unique functions of their jobs. Cleaning, cooking, childcare, and home care are all round-the-clock, strenuous, yet highly important functions of many domestic workers jobs. Allowing domestic workers to accrue paid days off, earn extra pay for working more than 6 days in a given week, and ensure that they are still able to maintain their personal privacy is the least that Connecticut can do to provide support and fairness to this group of workers who provide such critical services.

Domestic workers, especially those who live in the home that they work in, are very susceptible to unfair treatment, dangerous working conditions, and harassment under Connecticut's current laws. The isolated nature of their jobs makes it unlikely that domestic workers will discuss concerns about these subjects outside of their place of employment or seek help if they felt that they were a victim. Raised Bill No. 5527 would allow domestic workers opportunities to seek redress for all of these issues, including making more domestic workers eligible for Workers Compensation, and allowing them to seek recourse for harassment according to Connecticut's human rights laws.

Connecticut's domestic workers make important contributions to both our economy and the health and stability of Connecticut's families. Domestic workers should not have to choose between making a living and being treated fairly and humanely like the rest of Connecticut's workforce. Thank you for your consideration of the value of the work of Connecticut's domestic workers.